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SEP 30 2003

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September 23, 2003

Ms Marlene H Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S. W  
Washington, D. C 20554

Re In the Matter of Improving Public Safety Communications In The 800  
MHz Band; Docket No. 02-55 (*Ex Parte*)

Dear Madam Secretary:

The Washington County Board of Supervisors is writing to express its opposition to Nextel's so-called "Consensus Plan" and to urge the FCC to adopt the "Balanced Approach," which was filed on May 29, 2003. As discussed below in greater detail, we believe that the Consensus Plan will unnecessarily jeopardize Public Safety communication systems. Instead, the FCC should adopt a solution, such as the Balanced Approach, that does not require Public Safety licensees to relocate and does not reduce their interference protection

The Washington County Board of Supervisors has licensed an 800 MHz communications system, which is used by every emergency services provider in Washington County, MS. The communications system supports a number of emergency services providers' activities including law enforcement, all fire districts and all emergency medical services.

We are concerned that the Consensus Plan's relocation process is extremely complicated and there is no guarantee that Public Safety licensees will be able to continually operate their communications systems during this process. Furthermore, it is unrealistic to expect all Public Safety licensees to relocate in 12 months or less given the complexity of some Public Safety systems

Also, Public Safety licensees could be subject to more interference because the Consensus Plan protects Public Safety licensees only if they meet certain signal strength and receiver requirements. Because most Public Safety communication systems do not meet these requirements, they will have to expend significant resources to ensure that they are protected from

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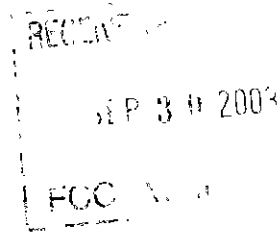
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interference. Further, the interference situation could be worse if rebanding is not completed before Nextel's funding runs out.

Therefore, the Washington County Board of Supervisors supports the Balanced Approach, which is superior to the Consensus Plan because it takes pro-active steps to immediately deal with Public Safety interference by relying on technical solutions and increased enforcement. As a result, this proposal is less disruptive and less expensive than the Consensus Plan so Public Safety communications will not be jeopardized. For all the reasons stated above, the Washington County Board of Supervisors urges the FCC to adopt the Balanced Approach.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tommy L. Goodwin".

Tommy L. Goodwin  
County Administrator

TLG/ebs

